

SAMPLE GROUND RULES FOR SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS

Purpose: Ground rules are guidelines for individual and group behaviors. They define the expectations members have for themselves and each other regarding how they will work together.

In general, a group should discuss ground rules together and develop a set they all agree upon.

BEHAVIORAL: Cover the group's norms for behavior.

- We will use active listening, e.g.,
 - we will listen to understand and speak to be understood
 - we will listen without interrupting each other
 - we will paraphrase speakers to ensure we understand
 - we will ask clarifying questions
 - we will maintain a respectful tone of voice when speaking with each other
 - we will not shout when speaking with each other
 - we agree to disagree respectfully
- We will not personalize issues (we will debate ideas, not individuals); no personal attacks
- Where we have differences of opinion, we agree to disagree with respect.
- During meetings we will keep our cell phones/pagers turned off or on vibrate.
- We will not use language that stereotypes others
- We commit to attend scheduled meetings and to participate actively.
- We will encourage everyone to participate.
- We agree to keep an open mind about information and ideas shared at meetings.
- We will be willing to accept criticism
- We will participate in good faith; be trustful and honest

JUST SOLUTIONS

PROCEDURAL: Include any guidelines for how the meeting will proceed.

- No side conversations
- Only one person talks at a time
- There are no stupid questions or opinions.
- At each meeting we will seek a volunteer to take notes of that meeting. We will review the previous meeting notes at the beginning of each meeting for corrections.
- It is ok to share information from meetings unless the group decides that information should remain confidential.
- When one of us leaves the room, the discussion stops (or continues)
- When one of us misses a meeting, it is his/her responsibility to get filled-in.
- Meetings will begin and end on time.
- All members have an equal voice
- Substitutes are (or are not) acceptable
- Decisions will be made by consensus. Consensus means that the group will work together to reach decisions that are acceptable to all, in spite of reservations or differences. Consensus is not unanimity.

In the event that consensus cannot be reached, the group will use a simple majority vote decision making process, where the decision is made by choosing a solution which is acceptable to more than half the group.

SUBSTANTIVE: Describe what content will be covered during the meeting.

- We will only discuss issues over which we have direct control.
- We will only discuss the present, not the past

